

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of controlling access to one of at least a system and a commodity according to at least time and position, said method comprising the steps of:
 - storing access permission parameters, said access permission parameters including one or more positions and one or more times at which access is to be permitted;
 - receiving one of an access request signal and a time interval trigger signal;
 - determining access parameters when said one of said signals is received, said access parameters including at least a current position and a current time;
 - comparing said access parameters to said access permission parameters; and
 - permitting access to said one of at least a system and a commodity when said access parameters satisfy said access permission parameters, wherein
said current position is determined by receiving a signal from a positioning system.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of limiting access to said one of at least a system and a commodity when said access parameters do not satisfy said access permission parameters.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of limiting access includes altering a state of said one of at least a system and a commodity.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of limiting access includes outputting a signal indicating a permission failure.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of limiting access includes prohibiting access to one or more portions of said one of at least a system and a commodity.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said comparing step includes decoding information using said access parameters, whereby said information can be decoded properly using access parameters that satisfy said access permission parameters.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of permitting access includes activating an actuator used to allow access to a shipping container.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said positioning system is a satellite positioning system.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said positioning system is a terrestrial positioning system that includes cellular towers.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said positioning system includes at least one shaped beam transmitter for transmitting respective signals to respective predetermined geographic areas at respective predetermined times.

11. An apparatus for controlling access to one of at least a system and a commodity according to at least time and position, said apparatus comprising:

a memory adapted to store access permission parameters, said access permission parameters including at least one position and at least one time at which access is to be permitted;

a signal receiver adapted to receive one of an access request signal and a time interval trigger signal;

a position signal receiver adapted to receive at least a position signal indicative of a current position; and

a processor adapted to:

determine access parameters when said signal receiver receives said one of access request and time interval trigger, said access parameters including at least said current position and a current time;

compare said access parameters to said access permission parameters; and

permit access to said one of at least a system and a commodity when said access parameters satisfy said access permission parameters.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said processor is further adapted to limit access to said one of at least a system and a commodity when said access parameters do not satisfy said access permission parameters.
13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processor limits access by outputting a signal for altering a state of said one of at least a system and a commodity.
14. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processor outputs a signal indicating a permission failure when said access parameters do not satisfy said access permission parameters.
15. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processor limits access by outputting a signal for prohibiting access to one or more portions of said one of at least a system and a commodity.
16. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said processor is adapted to compare said access parameters to said access permission parameters by decoding information using said access parameters, whereby said information can be decoded properly using access parameters that satisfy said access permission parameters.
17. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said processor permits access by activating an actuator used to allow access to a shipping container.
18. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said position signal receiver receives said position signal from a satellite positioning system.
19. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said position signal receiver receives said position signal from a terrestrial positioning system that includes cellular towers.
20. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said position signal receiver receives said position signal from a positioning system that includes at least one shaped beam transmitter for

transmitting respective signals to respective predetermined geographic areas at respective predetermined times.

21. An access control system, said system comprising:
one or more transportable devices, each of said one or more transportable devices including:
an access device adapted to provide access to one of at least a controlled system and a commodity; and
a signal receiver adapted to receive an access signal for said one of at least a controlled system and a commodity, whereby
said access device provides access to said one of at least a controlled system and a commodity when said signal receiver receives said access signal; and
at least one transmitter adapted to transmit a corresponding access signal for said one of at least a controlled system and a commodity of each respective transportable device to one or more predetermined positions at corresponding one or more predetermined times.

22. A set of computer program instructions for controlling access to one of at least a system and a commodity according to at least time and position, comprising:
an instruction for storing access permission parameters, said access permission parameters including at least one position and at least one time at which access is to be permitted;
an instruction for receiving one of an access request and a time interval trigger;
an instruction for determining access parameters when said one of access request and time interval trigger is received, said access parameters including at least a current position and a current time;
an instruction for comparing said access parameters to said access permission parameters;
and
an instruction for permitting access to said one of at least a system and a commodity when said access parameters satisfy said access permission parameters, wherein
said current position is determined by receiving a signal from a positioning system.